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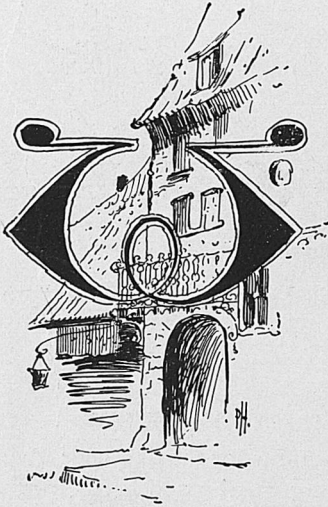
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JOTTINGS AT NEW ORLEANS

By PAUL HAMMERSMITH

With original illustrations by the author.



HAT is New Orleans in early spring but a garden of palms and roses! To the artist fresh from the chilly north it seems a foretaste of paradise. Its climate and vegetation are semi-tropical, and its people—all that this visitor cares for—belong naturally to it. The artist turns his back upon the American, prosperous, modern aspect of the northern half of the city, and wishes to see only the odd and foreign features, and to fancy it a town of Italy or southern France.

Nothing can be more enchanting than a ramble through the narrow streets of the crowded old-fashioned quarter on the French side of Canal street. The buildings are ancient and queer,—long sloping roofs broken by oddly shaped dormers and gables, and sheltering beneath overhanging eaves verandas, or galleries, as the citizens call them, whose beautiful wrought-iron trellis-work is almost hidden under Maréchal Niel roses.

Now and then a wrought-iron gate in the brick walls permits a glimpse of one of the large paved courts around which so many of these old houses are built. Tropical plants grow within it, in careless profusion; oddly shaped water-jars are standing about; and perhaps the curious gaze will be answered by a pair of dreamy black eyes, that leave no doubt that their owner might trace her ancestry far back among the Creoles.

Another charming stroll is along Esplanade street, to study the grand old colonial houses, each in its great garden; while the street itself is a long archway



OPPOSITE CONGO SQUARE, NEW ORLEANS

of foliage. It is only a step from here to one of the canals frequented by the Italian luggers. These boats are Neapolitan in build and rig and crew, and always picturesque, but especially so when tied to the canal-wharves or drawn up along the levee, their huge lateen sails loosely festooned to the slanted yards, and their decks overflowing, perhaps, with oranges.



A LITTLE HOUSE IN THE FRENCH QUARTER

The river-front has, indeed, almost unlimited attractions for the sketcher, from the old Choctaw women from across the river, selling gumbo and herbs, or the Italian vender of shells, baby-alligators or pineapples, to the busy commercial part, where hundreds of darkies are handling cotton as joyously as the northern boys are playing with the snow.

A special afternoon must be given to the battle-grounds, about five miles down the eastern bank of the Mississippi river. The street-cars carry one nearly to the scene of Jackson's famous conflict, leaving only a short and lovely walk. At the right of the road rolls the great booming river, and at the left are beautiful plantations, with white-colonial houses loitering peacefully among the tall moss-draped live-oaks and magnolias. A little further on is the National Cemetery and then the battle-field of 1815.

One object here is especially inviting for a sketch,—an old brick-and-stucco



THE HAUNTED HOUSE

"powder-house," roofed with long split shingles, and in just that delightful state of partial dilapidation that makes a thing picturesque. The beautifying hand of nature has taken up what man has neglected, and given the shingles and the remnants of other woodwork a velvety gray tone which no art could apply to them. The white stucco is gradually falling off in irregular patches, allowing the red of the bricks to show; and green vines climb up here and there, and curl about empty doorways, where swallows dart in and out, flashing in the sunshine an instant and then swallowed up by the shadow.

One can hardly conceive of studio-practice in such a city and climate as this in

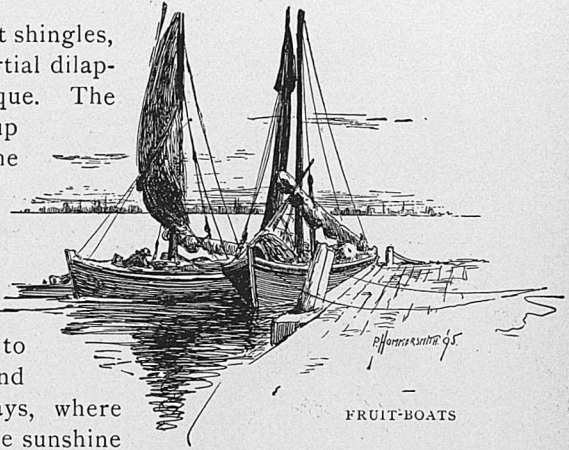
Spring. No person can stay in the house who is physically able to get out-of-doors. There is a quality of softness and pervading warmth and odorousness which can only be expressed by that word "balmy"

—a term whose meaning is only faintly understood by the northerner, even on his mildest and most beautiful of June days. The air is full of the scent of innumerable and unnamed flowers, and breathes of the cypress, juniper and bay, the odorous thronging vegetation of the cane-brakes, the spicy fragrance of the Louisiana woods. Mere existence

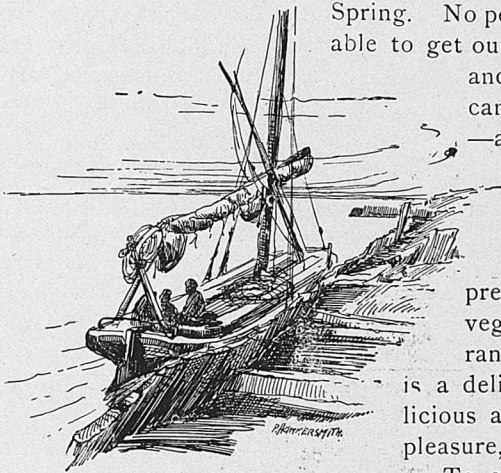
is a delight; it seems all one requires in this delicious air, where the mere fact of breathing is a pleasure, and one believes in the Fountain of Youth.

To crown such a morning, perhaps, you gain admittance to some old Creole garden that has

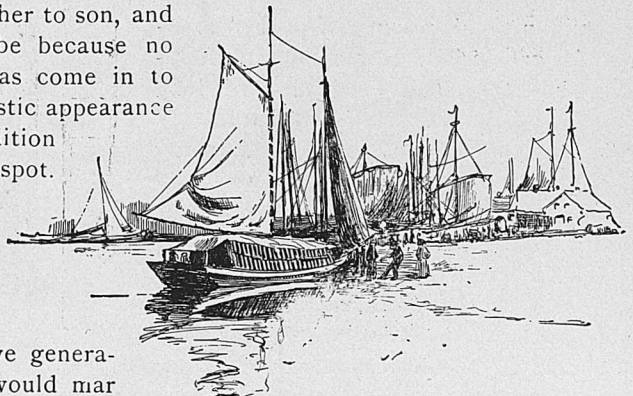
been handed down from father to son, and always kept as it used to be because no person with new tastes has come in to change it. That soft artistic appearance of age and undisturbed tradition overlies the whole lovely spot. The old trees still stand where they were planted by the first proprietor. Winds, dews and sunshine, indeed, seem to have leagued with each successive generation against anything that would mar the beauty of the old homestead or disturb its almost sacred associations.



FRUIT-BOATS



A COAL-BOAT



CHARCOAL-LUGGERS